



February 15, 2006

Dear Community Friends;

Reporting Crime to the Police

Last week, one of our South Seattle residents noticed something that didn't seem right. He heard and then saw a U-Haul truck and a light colored pick-up pulling up on his block at about 1am. It was suspicious, so he called 9-1-1. While on the phone with the 9-1-1 operator, he watched the driver of the pick-up open the cargo door of the U-Haul and examine the contents with a flashlight.

When officers arrived in the area a minute or so later, the suspects ran. The man came out of his house to point out to officers which direction the suspects went. Multiple patrol officers responded within minutes. Canine units were involved and a Guardian One helicopter was overhead using its heat imaging sensors to track the suspects. Two suspects were taken into custody and stolen property was recovered.

Why All The Fuss?

It is important to note that there have been a number of recent thefts of U-haul trucks, and the same light colored pick-up had been spotted at U-Haul locations in South Seattle. Also of note is that the U-haul truck was connected with an individual with an extensive criminal history. This individual's residence has been an on-going nuisance for the surrounding neighbors. And while the caller may not have known any of this, that one phone call may have helped us resolve multiple criminal complaints. And for that, we are grateful and send a hearty Thank You! to that individual.

I relate this story because it points out several important things. First, the man knew something about the trucks was suspicious. Second, he did something about it – he reported it! Third, he assisted officers by pointing out direction of travel. And he was

willing to speak with officers afterwards and provide additional information. He could have remained anonymous or requested no contact. Instead, he made

himself available and provided information that was critical to the investigation. For that, we again say Thank You!

Normal vs. Suspicious Activity

In our last newsletter, I asked how do you know what's suspicious? To know what's suspicious, you first have to know what's normal. Think about what is normal for your neighborhood. For the neighborhood in our retelling, it was not normal for a U-haul to park on their block at 1am with a pick-up circling around it.

How do you find out what's normal? Get out of your house and engage. Communicate! Get to know your neighbors, talk with each other and alert each other when something doesn't seem "normal" for you. This is the essence of Block Watch: communicate with each other, agree to watch out for each other and report crime to 9-1-1. I have found when neighbors are connected with each other, the more they show they care about their community, those communities tend to have less crime. As a co-worker of mine once said, ***"Neighborhoods have the level of crime that they tolerate."*** Think about it.

You Don't Call – We Don't Come

It's your neighborhood: you know what fits and what doesn't. Police don't, and we won't unless you tell us. We cannot address a problem if we don't know about it, and the only way we *are* going to know is if you tell us. That's why reporting crime is so important. Bottom line: you may *want* us there, but unless you call, we ain't comin'. Please, report it. Call 9-1-1.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention